

PROJECT PLAN

COASTAL SLOPE TRAIL -KANAN-DUME ROAD TO LATIGO CANYON ROAD SEGMENT

Project Site Description

The Coastal Slope Trail Project will provide open space parkland protection and a recreational trail linkage to existing parklands, open space, viewshed, habitat, and watershed lands within the Malibu coastal area of the Santa Monica Mountains, between Zuma Canyon Park to the west, and Corral Canyon Park to the east. This Project Plan entails acquisition of parcels in the Coastal Slope Trail segment between Kanan Dume Road and Latigo Canyon Road, and eventual trail improvements.

The Coastal Slope Trail is a part of both the Los Angeles County and City of Malibu General Plans. The proposed trail within Los Angeles County extends from Will Rogers State Park in Pacific Palisades westward to just beyond the Ventura County line. Portions of the proposed trail alignment within the subject Project Plan area, between Kanan-Dume Road and Latigo Canyon Road, are under private ownership, although existing federal, state, and local parklands and Offers to Dedicate comprise a significant portion. As a result, siting the actual trail route through some key sections is fluid pending both public funding availability and the success of public agencies in securing trail easements through fee acquisition or land use permitting process dedications, or landowner donations. A major objective of the trail project plan is to provide a means to connect the series of existing coastal canyon parks north of Pacific Coast Highway.

The subject parcels are located in unincorporated Los Angeles County and City of Malibu. The primary vegetation type is Coastal Sage Scrub, with large areas of exotic annual grasses and black mustard; riparian corridors with sycamores, coast live oak, California walnut, and elderberry. Herds of mule deer and occasional mountain lion traverse the Project Plan area.

Project areas that are part of this Project Plan were evaluated for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's 2000 Land Acquisition Workprogram; including Ramirez-Escondido Canyons-Upper, Ramirez Canyon West, Solstice Canyon Additions, Solstice Canyon-Wilmot Lane, Solstice-Corral Connector, Escondido Canyon North Addition, and Escondido Creek Headwaters.

The Coastal Slope Trail area includes existing public land owned or managed by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), Mountains Recreation and

Conservation Authority (MRCA), and National Park Service (NPS). Parks include Ramirez Canyon Park (SMMC), parcels in upper Ramirez Canyon (NPS), Escondido Canyon Park (SMMC and MRCA), parcels in Latigo Canyon (MRCA). Just to the east of the subject Project Plan area are Solstice Canyon Park (NPS), Los Angeles Department of Water and Power land, and Corral Canyon Park (SMMC and MRCA). To the west of Kanan-Dume Road is Zuma Canyon parkland owned by NPS.

Governmental Entities with Jurisdiction Over Project Area

County of Los Angeles
City of Malibu
California Coastal Commission
California Department of Fish and Game
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
National Park Service

Planning Objectives and Principles Sought to be Achieved by the Project

Acquisition of properties for parkland will protect open space and habitat resources in the Coastal Zone of the Santa Monica Mountains near Malibu. Development of trails and facilities for overnight and day use by the public will provide for low impact public recreational access, including an uninterrupted six-mile segment of the Coastal Slope Trail. Management objectives are for:

- (1) preserving pristine riparian streams and stream corridors from physical destruction and/or long term resource damage from inappropriate land uses;
- (2) providing open space buffer between parklands;
- (3) preserving opportunities for camping and outdoor recreation for youth, families, and individuals with disabilities;
- (4) providing and preserving regional recreational trail opportunities for hiking, bicycling, equestrian users;
- (5) preserving valuable habitat and linkages for large mammals and other species;

(6) protecting water quality in the coastal canyon; groundwater recharge, and minimizing need for engineered flood control improvements.

Under ideal conditions, roughly all the acres of undeveloped land identified in this Project Plan would be acquired in fee simple by a public park and open space agency to protect from incompatible development and landform alteration. Restrictive conservation and/or trail easements may provide adequate protection in areas where terrain severely limits public access, or where landowners wish to retain fee title while still providing for public trail use.

The portion of this Project Plan that addresses land acquisition is in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Under California Code of Regulations, Sections 15313 and 15316 this portion of the project is exempt from CEQA because the acquisitions will be for wildlife conservation purposes and for the establishment of parks. A Notice of Exemption has been filed with the State Clearinghouse and the County of Los Angeles for potential acquisition of parcels in the project area. Additional CEQA documentation will be necessary for some of the recommended improvement projects for trail building or camps.

No amendments to the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan are required for this project.

Proposed Land Uses

All properties contained within the Project Plan area are proposed for open space, trails, viewshed, trail, watershed protection, recreation, and wildlife habitat purposes. Prior to any final design, CEQA documentation, or construction of any trailhead or other facilities, a forum for public input will be provided.

Detailed Site Analysis

The following analysis is grouped by the Conservancy's Workprogram 2000 project acquisition nominations.

Assessor Parcels Numbers 4467-002-042;-044; and -060

These parcels are within the the Ramirez Creek watershed, which flows directly to

Santa Monica Bay. They contain important coastal habitat and are adjacent to existing parkland in Ramirez Canyon. The acquisition of all three parcels would protect watershed and land resources, and are needed to facilitate a link in the Coastal Slope Trail.

Assessor Parcel Numbers 4465-004-070 and 071;
4467-002-041;
4467-003-031;
4467-003-021;
4460-015-001;
4460-014-006 and -008

These eight properties are located between Kanan Dume Road to Corral Canyon within the eastern slope of Ramirez Canyon to Latigo Canyon Road, just touching into the Latigo Canyon watershed.

All of the owners have been contacted by Conservancy staff. All of the parcels have been appraised. Most are willing sellers of either easements or fee ownership. When purchased in fee, properties would be administered by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), which operates all of the Conservancy's parklands in the vicinity (Ramirez Canyon Park, Escondido Canyon Park, and Corral Canyon Park). Conservation or trail easements acquired would likewise be administered by and monitored by the MRCA.

Government Agencies, Organizations and Private Parties Consulted

National Park Service
County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation
Office of Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, County of Los Angeles
California Coastal Commission
City of Malibu
City of Malibu Trails Committee
The City Project
Anuahak Youth Organization
Outward Bound Adventures Los Angeles

Analysis of Economic Feasibility of Proposed Project

This economic feasibility analysis addresses the potential for public agencies to acquire the properties addressed in the Project Plan. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) has received a Proposition 50 Conservancy grant for purchase of the parcels, for Coastal Watersheds of Santa Monica Bay. Los Angeles County Proposition A Third District Excess funds have also been made available to the MRCA. Acquisition and improvements in the Project Plan are also eligible for Proposition 84 funds for Coastal Watersheds of Santa Monica Bay.